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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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JERUSALEM RESOLUTION:
ILL-TIMED; SOME USE AS AN EXCUSE NOT TO
TALK PEACE PROCESS;
SENATE CRANKING OUT TOO MANY RESOLUTIONS

ON MARCH 22, THE SENATE PASSED S. CON. RES. 106 -- THE MOYNIHAN RESOLUTION ON JERUSALEM.

I AND FOUR OTHER SENATORS -- MCCLURE, METZENBAUM, MURKOWSKI AND SIMPSON -- HAVE JUST RETURNED FROM A VISIT TO THE MIDDLE EAST. WE MADE STOPS IN SYRIA, EGYPT, JORDAN, IRAQ AND ISRAEL.

WE HEARD A LOT ABOUT THE RESOLUTION -- AND WHAT WE HEARD LEADS ME TO SAY A FEW WORDS TODAY ABOUT THE RESOLUTION; AND, MORE IMPORTANT, ABOUT THE PROCESS OF DEALING WITH SUCH RESOLUTIONS AROUND HERE.

NOW LET ME SAY UP-FRONT: I DON'T HAVE ANY QUARREL WITH SENATOR MOYNIHAN, OR HIS PRINCIPAL REPUBLICAN CO-SPONSOR, SENATOR BOSCHWITZ, ON THIS RESOLUTION. THEY ARE OUTSTANDING SENATORS, AND STRONG SUPPORTERS OF ISRAEL.

AND, BY THE WAY, I HAPPEN TO THINK MY RECORD OF 26 YEARS IN CONGRESS PROVES I'M A STRONG SUPPORTER OF ISRAEL, TOO.

BUT THEY BELIEVE STRONGLY IN THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN S. CON. RES. 106. AND I HAVE NO QUARREL WITH THAT.

THEY PLAYED BY THE RULES, FAIR AND SQUARE. NOTHING I'M ABOUT TO SAY IS INTENDED TO CAST ANY ASPERSION ON THEM.

THE RESOLUTION PROCESS

BUT I AM CONCERNED ABOUT THE PROCESS.

S. CON. RES. 106 WAS INTRODUCED ON MARCH 20. IN TWO DAYS, IT HAD 84 COSPONSORS.

IT CAME TO THE FLOOR, IN WRAP-UP, ON MARCH 22. THERE WAS NO DEBATE. IN MY RECOLLECTION, THE TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION WASN'T EVEN READ INTO THE RECORD. WE HAD A VOICE VOTE. AND THE RESOLUTION WAS PASSED.

NOW YOU SEE IT -- NOW YOU DON'T.

AGAIN, THE RESOLUTION HAD 84 CO-SPONSORS. BY MY COUNT, 43 SENATORS SIGNED ON DURING THE FIRST 24 HOURS AFTER INTRODUCTION. 40 MORE JOINED IN ON THE SECOND DAY. I WAS ONE OF THEM.

WE ALL KNOW HOW IT WORKS AROUND HERE. AND AGAIN LET ME SAY: THIS IS THE WAY IT WORKS FOR ALL OF US -- NOT JUST SENATOR MOYNIHAN AND SENATOR BOSCHWITZ. AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER, WE ALL DO IT.

WE CARRY OUR RESOLUTION, OR OUR LETTER, INTO THE CLOAKROOM. WE BUTTON-HOLE EVERY SENATOR WHO WALKS IN, AND PUSH THEM FOR AN IMMEDIATE SIGNATURE. HALF THE TIME, THE SIGNER DOESN'T EVEN READ THE TEXT.

MOST OF THE TIME THAT DOESN'T MATTER.

THIS TIME, IT MATTERED A LOT.

JERUSALEM

S. CON. RES. 106 DEALS WITH ONE OF THE MOST SENSITIVE AND EMOTIONAL ISSUES IN THE MIDDLE EAST -- THE STATUS OF THE CITY OF JERUSALEM. THE RESOLUTION DECLARES JERUSALEM THE CAPITAL OF ISRAEL -- THE POSITION OF THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT; A POSITION 180 DEGREES CONTRARY TO THE VIEWS OF THE ARAB STATES AND THE PALESTINIANS.

MOST IMPORTANT, THE RESOLUTION DECLARES ON AN ISSUE THAT OUR GOVERNMENT -- AND MANY OUTSIDE OBSERVERS -- SEE AS BETTER LEFT TO NEGOTIATIONS AMONG THE PARTIES INVOLVED, RATHER THAN DECIDED BY UNILATERAL ACTION.

SEVERAL WEEKS AGO, PRESIDENT BUSH SPOKE ONE SENTENCE -- ONE, SINGLE SENTENCE -- ON THIS SAME SUBJECT. THAT ONE SENTENCE SPARKED AN EXPLOSION OF HEATED RHETORIC IN THE MIDDLE EAST -- AND PROBABLY ALSO SPARKED THIS RESOLUTION.

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